

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A method of pulling a free end (83) of a needle thread (62) from a top to a bottom side of at least one work piece (74, 75) upon a first stitch of a seam (81) that is to be sewn by a sewing machine, comprising
- 5 - a needle (11) which is movable in up and down reciprocation, guiding a needle thread (62) that has been taken from a needle-thread supply (61) by a thread lever (64);
- 10 - at least one presser (25) to be placed on, and lifted off, the at least one work piece (74, 75) by a length of stroke (a); and
- 15 - a rotarily drivable hook (12), a tip (79) of which seizes a needle-thread loop (78) and extends it for forming a stitch,
- with the needle thread (62) being held tight between the needle (11) and the thread lever (64) while the needle-thread loop (78) is extended so that a free end (83) is pulled through the work piece (74, 75) by the hook tip (79), and
- 20 -- with the presser (25) being at least partially relieved over a relief time (t) while the needle thread (62) is held tight;
- wherein as the at least one work piece (74, 75) increases in thickness (s), the relief time (t) rises.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the presser (25) is relieved in dependence on the length of stroke (a) of the at least one presser (25).

- 25 3. A sewing machine for putting into practice a method of pulling a free end (83) of a needle thread (62) from a top to a bottom side of at least one work piece (74, 75) upon a first stitch of a seam (81), the sewing machine comprising

- a needle (11) which is movable in up and down reciprocation, guiding a needle thread (62) that has been taken from a needle-thread supply (61) by a thread lever (64);
- at least one presser (25) to be placed on, and lifted off, the at least one work piece (74, 75) by a length of stroke (a); and
- a rotarily drivable hook (12), the tip (79) of which seizes a needle-thread loop (78) and extends it for forming a stitch,
- a needle-thread-(62) clamp (65) which is stationarily provided between the thread lever (64) and the needle (11);
- a presser drive; and
- a control system (8) for the thread clamp (65) and the presser drive; wherein a presser-relief drive is provided to be triggered by the control system (8) in accordance with a function which is recorded in the control system (8), reflecting a dependency of the time of actuation of the presser-relief drive on the thickness (s) of the at least one work piece (74, 75).

4. A sewing machine according to claim 3,
wherein a feeder (29) is provided, which is drivable alternately of the presser (25);
- 20 wherein a joint drive is provided for the presser (25) and the feeder (29);
and
wherein the presser-relief drive is a presser-lift-off drive (46).

5. A sewing machine according to claim 4,
- 25 wherein an adjustable lifting mechanism (14) is provided for adjustment of the length of stroke (a) of the presser (25); and
wherein a potentiometer (59), which is coupled with the lifting mechanism (14), is provided for detection and transmission, to the control system (8),

of a measured variable representing the length of stroke (a) of the presser (25) which is adjusted on the lifting mechanism (14).